

From: Christopher Owen
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Judgment

As an European based consumer and small business I am very concerned at the way that despite the well documented methods that Microsoft used to lever itself into market dominance there is going to be no real remedy. If this was the automotive industry or even in the utilities steps would have been taken to sort out the anti competitive practices and the theft of intellectual property. The only time a small software house tried to get compensation from Microsoft for the illegal use of their intellectual property was when the Stac corporation sued Microsoft for bundling disk compression in MS DOS 6.0. The outcome Stac won the day but as the court did not award costs the cost of the case broke the company so in essence it was an hollow victory. Microsoft has admitted to tactics such as increasing the price of products to a company if they find out any competing products are being used. It was this last tactic that helped pushed Vobis and Escom into history. Recently we had Microsoft posting cereal packets to Novell customers and insinuating that the support would run out soon as far as I am aware this case is still ongoing. The fact that Novell had just announced the release of a new product did not seem to stop the Microsoft marketing machine from trying to convince Novell customers that Novell were leaving the network software market. From a users point of view most of the Microsoft product line is woefully inadequate with constant patching require to get it to work correctly and once the product is stable it is dropped and a new more glitzy product is introduced. Steve Balmer's statement that in time everyone would be paying Microsoft for their Internet uploads and downloads is a cause for concern as Microsoft does not own the Internet so how can they charge for access to it. In the UK we had the embarrassment of a site set up for the UK government only allowing Microsoft Browsers access, little more than a method of forcing people who needed to access that site to change not only their browser ! but in some cases their platform and OS as well. This last point has now been opened up to other browsers but it still goes to show how Microsoft will try to further consolidate its market dominance to reach the goal of a monopoly. Pricing in Europe is a mess with the UK paying the highest prices for Microsoft products and no real reason being given for this, the new XBox is a prime example made in Europe yet we will be paying 50% more for the product than the Americans and Japanese. Consumers here in the UK did look to the American courts to get Microsoft to play fair. With standard oil, IBM and AT&T remedies were forced on the companies to make them compete fairly yet it seems to view here that Microsoft has placed itself above to law. Has access to the Gates mansion been granted for tax assessment purposes yet? If you are still unsure of the conduct of this company just read a Book called The Microsoft Files it is riveting reading and goes a long way to explaining how market dominance was achieved., or are the methods described in the book standard American practices? For the sake of the little man in the street just make sure that the Microsoft remedy is just and fair to all parties and not a licence for Microsoft to carry on its quest for world domination.

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